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ABSTRACT

Northern Ireland has many societal needs requiring attention. The Ulster Project seeks to identify and address those needs while encouraging social progress directed toward maintaining positive social relationships among Northern Ireland's religious and cultural groups. By emphasizing counselor leadership within the framework of a critical curriculum, the Ulster Project hopes to provide Northern Ireland's youth with a sufficient social foundation to build and organize a more harmonious belief system that empowers the youth to make the move towards a lasting peace. This curriculum guidebook is intended to supplement the Ulster Project Curriculum by answering previously unanswered questions and offering additional suggestions for practice. The guidebook provides in-depth background information about the Ulster Project, its curriculum goals, its breakthrough objectives, leadership clarification, and how to understand the counselor's role as curriculum leader. It is divided into the following chapters: (1) "What Does This Look Like in Practice?"; (2) "Breakthrough Themes" (communication; leadership and risk taking; conflict deliberation; understanding social practice discourse; and interdependence and collaboration); (3) "Some Additional Things To Consider"; and (4) "A Final Thought." Each of the five themes in the guidebook has introductory activities, an activity framework, and suggestions to guide the participants' dialogue. (Contains 31 references.) (BT)

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The Ulster Project Curriculum Guidebook

Erin Carlin and Colleen M. Kennedy

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Forward

This guidebook is written for and dedicated to the Ulster Project counselors, past, present and future. Its purpose is not to provide an overview of the Ulster Project Curriculum, but rather supplement it by answering previously unanswered questions and offering additional suggestions for practice.

Please know that the references and activities cited were selected because, at the time, they were the best I could find and/or design. This does not mean that they are the best available. Therefore, I encourage you to not only research and develop your own activities and leadership practices but also to communicate any new discoveries that you feel should be integrated into the curriculum.

I encourage you, when reading this guidebook, to refer back to the curriculum for specific information, or just to more fully appreciate what the motivational factors were behind my using the concepts that I did. The success of this Project to the greatest extent depends on you, the Ulster Project Counselors. That is a great weight on your shoulders but not when you put into perspective the weight the Northern Irish youth have on their shoulders to create a foundation for a lasting peace. In all, my hope is that this guidebook will give you a more practical understanding of what the Ulster Project hopes to achieve, as well as provide valuable insight to how you can better use your leadership skills in attaining the Ulster Project goals.

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Introduction

The Ulster Project

Northern Ireland has many societal needs requiring attention. The Ulster Project seeks to identify and address those needs while encouraging social processes directed toward maintaining positive social relationships among the religious and cultural groups of Northern Ireland. By emphasizing counselor leadership within the framework of a Critical curriculum, the Ulster Project hopes to provide Northern Ireland's youth with a sufficient social foundation to build and organize a more harmonious belief system that empowers the Ulster Project the youth to make the move towards a lasting peace.

Ulster Project Curriculum Goals

Intellectual Development (Knowledge):

- Northern Irish youth will reach an understanding of basic cross-cultural communication requirements.
- Northern Irish youth will develop purposeful skills as future leaders of Northern Ireland.
- Northern Irish youth will develop and apply skills in critical thinking.
- Northern Irish youth will develop competence, motivation for continuing and adapting peace-making efforts in a changing society.

Social, Civic and Cultural Goals (Skills and Abilities):

- Northern Irish youth shall acquire and continually improve those qualities necessary for responsible leadership,
- Northern Irish youth shall acquire those attributes necessary for functioning, on a daily basis as peacemakers in their own community settings.
- Northern Irish youth shall develop skills in various forms of recreation that will provide for lifelong enjoyment of community participation.
- Northern Irish youth will begin to recognize and prevent potentially volatile interactions among peers.
- Northern Irish youth will develop skills in the critical evaluation of cultural offerings and opportunities.

Spirituality (Dispositions):

- Northern Irish youth will develop an understanding of how their spiritual values are applicable and respected throughout the community.
- Northern Irish youth shall acquire the greatest appreciation and understanding of themselves as persons belonging to a social and cultural group other than their denominational identity.

Ulster Project Breakthrough Objectives

The Ulster Project Breakthrough Objectives make the Project Goals known by stating the performance expected of the participants, that is, the skills and knowledge they are to demonstrate. In addition, the Objectives indicate the degree of mastery the Ulster Project staff desires of the participants, and in many instances, the conditions under which the performance will take place.

Theme One - Communication

- The Ulster Project participants will explore the concept of communication. This exploration will lead to participants engaging in dialogue,
- The Ulster Project participants will use their communication skills in risk taking situations while building trust among their peers,
- The Ulster Project participants will dialogically explore issues of teamwork. The result will be mutually-agreed solutions to problems and demonstration of organizational skills, and
- The Ulster Project participants will demonstrate leadership roles through effective communication.

Theme Two – Leadership and Risk Taking

- The Ulster Project participants will explore issues and relationships between risk and trust, leadership and support, independence and interdependence. They will demonstrate their understanding by developing and sustaining successful organizations,
- The Ulster Project participants will practice and act upon their communication and problem solving skills as leaders of a group, and
- As leaders, the Ulster Project participants will organize the learning of their team.

Theme Three – Conflict Deliberation

- The Ulster Project participants will understand how the ideologies surrounding their identity can be misunderstood and lead to conflict, and
- The Ulster Project participants will develop deliberation skills that will develop as useful tools when working through conflict in a nonviolent manner. Indications of a successful activity arise from the participants' ability to carry a role-play of a tension-ridden situation towards a solution.

Theme Four – Understanding Social Practice (Discourse)

- The Ulster Project participants will understand that literature and other media contain social and perceptual distortions that send different messages,
- The Ulster Project participants will understand how these media affect their interpretations of the "other" and consequently shapes the discourse, and

- The Ulster project participants will realize that by gaining insight into basic social practices, they can think more critically about there own and the "other's" discourse.

Theme Five – Interdependence and Collaboration

- The Ulster Project participants will understand the importance of intimacy by practicing sharing information,
- Through the proper use of shared authority, the participants will practice sharing credit for success,
- The Ulster Project participants will recognize the impact of rewarding honesty and openness, and
- The Ulster Project participants will recognize the importance of collaborating with other individuals and other teams.

Leadership Clarification

In relationship to the Ulster Project, leadership refers to the Ulster Project counselors' visible practice within the Ulster Project. A large part of this practice is to make sure that you are available for talking with, listening to, and mentoring the Project participants. However, the counselors' primary role as leaders is that they need to be able to encourage learning. More specifically, you, the counselor-leaders need to inspire Northern Ireland's future leaders (UP participants) to knowingly take risks and take a stand on sensitive issues surrounding the peace building process. Overall, the responsibility for transferring the Ulster Project vision to Northern Irish youth largely rests on the counselors. Furthermore, I would contend that the most crucial factor

determining success in this leadership practice is the your ability as counselors to allow the Northern Irish youth to do their own thinking without dictating a specific process.

Understanding the Practice of Teaching Leadership within the Ulster Project

The social processes underlying the Ulster Project come together in curriculum and teaching practices designed to foster growth in individual capacities and increase social participation in the area of peace building. To the Ulster Project counselor, growth in individual capacities implies the use of intellectual power to make your ideas clear while maintaining a thoughtful understanding of other counselors and Project participants (Stratemeyer et al, 1957). Proper development of this intellectual power requires a greater awareness of the moral choices underlying your actions. Failure to build up this awareness sets off expressions of individual freedom (e.g. identity-driven behavior, individuality) as condemnations of one's responsibility to "others," and in this case, the Ulster Project participants.

The Ulster Project hopes to increase societal participation (e.g. peace building) among its participants. The obvious advantage is that an increase in societal participation requires further development of person-to-person relationships (Stratemeyer et al, 1957), but the obvious is by no means simply accomplished. The Ulster Project recognizes the societal need for Northern Irish religious and cultural groups to establish effective social and person-to-person relationships. However, Project counselors must appreciate that these relationships require an understanding of the complex social dynamics of group membership and inter-group relationships.

In nonspecific terms, group membership, as a social process, includes deciding when to join a group, how to participate as a group member and when to take leadership responsibilities. Most likely, you came into your Ulster Project counselors position through this process, and it is now your responsibility to conceptualize and apply these lived experiences of group membership and leadership as you guide the Project participants through deliberative efforts that foster reconciliation between the identity divide.[1]

[1] The Ulster Project believes that successful reconciliation efforts incorporate a great emphasis on inter-group relationships, especially when dealing with the sensitivity of Northern Irish religious and cultural groups.

Understanding the Counselors Role as Curriculum Leaders

The Ulster Project aspires for the Northern Irish youth to react with heightened interest and enthusiasm toward their roles as social, cultural and political leaders. However, if Northern Irish youth see little relevance in the planned curricular activities to their lived experience and participation within their communities, their motivation to participate in and subsequently learn from the Project experience will be limited. Therefore, counselors need be passionate towards the curricular vision and the possibilities. Moreover, counselors must be aware that in addition to lived experiences, you hold extremely valuable knowledge and competencies. These attributes are central to any curricular endeavor. Ulster Project counselors' thinking is a primary driving force in the Project Curriculum practice and you need to be reflective and aware of the assumptions behind the process of the curriculum development (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998).

Your knowledge and practice within the curriculum should incorporate the ability to provide necessary support for the Northern Irish youth by clarifying Project goals and values. Thus, I return to an emphasis on counselors' need to maintain a critical understanding of their own knowledge, the dynamics of group membership and inter-group relationships and an awareness of the moral choices underlying your actions. Through this understanding and awareness, you will be better able to uncovering the educative purposes of project activities, furnish democratic instructional leadership, keep the channels of communication open to all of the participants and engage the participants in dialogue focused on developing their own solutions.

Chapter 01: What does this look like in practice?

There are many constructive counselor strategies to use in practicing the Ulster Project Curriculum. Your personalization of these strategies is unmistakably one of the most crucial elements of a successful Project. Keeping this in mind, you need not use these suggestions to limit or dictate any of your teaching practices. Their purpose is to give you a more thorough understanding of the frameworks by which the Ulster Project Curriculum operates.

In order to construct an appropriate Breakthrough[2] environment, the counselors may find Barell's (1995) suggestions valuable. They are

- Modeling the thinking/feeling process,
- Setting high expectations,
- Encouraging the Ulster Project participants to set goals,
- Listening and problem posing,
- Allowing and understanding the importance of silence (as in waiting for a response),
- Responding to questions, answers and statements posed by the participants with curiosity and understanding,
- Fostering peer interaction and dialogue, and
- Developing dispositions of inquiry and cooperation.

These practices (Barrel, 1995) are only as successful when taken into consideration with your understanding of various strategic processes behind:

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[2] Breakthrough is the name given to the Ulster Project's curricular activities that provide a framework of empowerment for the Northern Irish youth to begin the process of peace building.

identification, thoughtfulness, elaboration, clarification and relating, transferring thought process and understanding, searching for counterevidence, metacognitive awareness (thinking about your thinking) and the distinction between dialogue and discussion.

To begin to explore these strategic processes, it must be noted the extent to which successful Breakthrough sessions align themselves with how well the participants listen to each other and the counselor. Therefore, in stressing identification as a learning process (Barell, 1995), you should encourage the Ulster Project participants to practice identifying with what their peers are saying. In other words, ask the participants to visualize what the speaker is saying, while in the process picture key ideas and relationships to their own lives. Often, this is as easy as asking all of the Project participants to ask themselves if they agree or disagree with the speaker. However, it is important to invite those involved to pretend they are in the speaker's shoes and attempt to appreciate how the speaker feels before they voice their agreement or disagreement (Barell, 1995).

There are also several questions counselors can pose in order to elicit participant thoughtfulness.[3]

- What do you think you know about _____?
- What do you want to know about _____? And
- What have you learned about _____ (Ogle, 1986)?

Keep in mind, that these questions are most effective when asked several times and at various stages of the Breakthrough sessions. In most situations however, you may pose

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[3] Counselors may also begin to advocate the practice of thinking of questions to ask the speaker when he/she is through talking (Barell, 1995).

the first two before initiating a topic or before a speaker begins, and the last question is asked afterwards (Barell, 1995).

By design, the Ulster Project's Breakthroughs will trigger strong emotions. This is of crucial importance. As such, the counselors must be appreciative of their capacity to elicit these feelings with their actions. Failing to understand this (Barell, 1995) makes it more difficult for the participants to confront those problems that are difficult to identify. Hence, it remains ever the more difficult for these participants to overcome the initial and real anxieties that accompany cross-community peace initiatives. Further, it is important to refrain from belittling or dismissing the emotions that are being experienced by the Project participants. To do so may result in losing the attention and cooperation of the Project participants and damage the fragile trust, which the success of the Breakthroughs requires.

The time shared in the Breakthrough sessions is relatively small and the counselors carry a great responsibility in making the most of each session. Unfortunately, there is no procedure for "making the most of it." Still, there are a few suggestions as a framework to help the counselors maintain momentum.[4]

An initial suggestion is to encourage the participants to elaborate on their responses. Elaboration is encouraged when short and superficial answers are used. The counselor needs to know that encouragement is not merely asking the participant to tell you more. Rather, you will need to seek more specifics and an understanding of the

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[4] Remember that these suggestions, in conjunction with the curriculum are a framework of actions. As a framework, the purpose is not to systematically force the following suggestions into each session. To do so constitutes a disruption or derivation from the philosophical foundation of the curriculum.

thinking that led to the participants response, and even enough detail that the other participants can make certain their own agreement of disagreement (Barell, 1995).

Another suggestion is for the counselor to seek clarification. The need for clarification arises when the participants' responses initially are unclear. In other words, when certain answers are expected and another is given, you may need to ask the participants' to explain their rationale (Barell, 1995). Then the counselor may find it necessary to relate meanings (Barell, 1995), that is invite the participant to extend their thinking by relating it to another's way of understanding the issue. This leads to the transferring thought process and understanding.

Through the course of the Breakthrough, you may recognize opportunities, such as when the participants are fumbling an issue they are unsure about, to transfer the participant thoughts and knowledge of those things familiar into the uncertain issue they are deliberating (Barell, 1995). Questions like the following are all useful, when transferring thought processes and understandings.

- Where else have you _____?
- Where else might you _____? And
- How can you relate this to _____?

Searching for counterevidence is another suggestion for maintaining the momentum of the Breakthroughs. This suggestion works together with the idea-transferring understanding largely because by asking for counterevidence, the counselor is working to broaden the participant's awareness of the unexamined factors (Barell, 1995) rooted in their thought process. As a cautionary note, it remains important to appreciate the attachment that many participants develop to their positions. Nevertheless,

you should continue to encourage and invite all to become open to other points of view. Remember that you are not there to pass judgment, rather facilitate the peace building process.

Depending on the inter-group relationships and level of critical thinking skills developed, the counselor may recognize that many of these suggestions for practice lead to what Barell (1995) terms seeking metacognitive awareness. Simply put, this implies asking the participants to think about their own thinking. For example,

- How did you arrive at that? And
- Where did that solution come from?

The intended result is that the participants begin raising their awareness of how to gain control over how they view the Northern Irish situation.

Chapter 02: Breakthrough Themes

In all, the Ulster Project seeks to inspire five basic understandings in the Northern Irish youth: communication, leadership and risk taking, conflict deliberation, understanding social practice (discourse), and interdependence and collaboration. Together, these understandings make up the Ulster Project Breakthrough Themes.

The themes are the focal points of the breakthrough sessions. By design, they give direction to a single session or series of breakthrough sessions and may lead to certain and at times very specific activities. However, the activities are not directives, nor does completing them indicate Theme mastery.

For additional support, each Breakthrough activity is preceded by suggested introductory activities. Unless stated otherwise, these activities have been created and

selected from individual experiences. Some of which may be an appropriate introduction for more than one Breakthrough Theme.

Theme One – Communication

The Ulster Project Curriculum makes every effort to emphasize the distinction between the terms dialogue and discussion. The reason for this distinction is evident in the conversational elements of the Breakthrough sessions. For example, Breakthroughs that take a discussion approach to conversation are often those in which participants offer a barrage of point – counterpoints. The resulting solution is prohibitive of any shared vision because the consequent decisions made do not evolve from the collective understanding of all the participants. Rather, they proceed from the most distinguishable, or powerful argument presented in the discussion. Therefore, the participants do not share authority.

On the other hand, when dialogue is the conversational focus, the participants share authority and the barrages of point – counterpoints do not dictate the progression of issue solutions. Instead, dialogue allows all of the participants to be the driving force behind the solution. Dialogue empowers the participants to share control of the solution because it invites an exploration and understanding of how their Project peers think and feel.

A simple understanding of the distinction between dialogue and discussion (Barell, 1995) begins as each participant listens and responds to each other so that the conversational pattern is less like a recitation (N-I-N-I-N-I…) and more like an interactive session (N-I-I-I-I-N-I-I-N-I-I-I…). A primary key to creating a proper

environment that is conducive to dialogue is inviting the participants to state their position (understanding) of the issue without calling upon them.

The following table from Gerard & Ellinor (2000) makes the distinction between Dialogue and Discussion that the practice of the Ulster Project Communication Theme hopes to achieve.

Dialogue	Discussion
To inquire to learn	To tell, sell, persuade
To unfold shared meaning	To gain agreement on one meaning
To integrate multiple perspectives	To evaluate and select the best
To uncover and examine assumptions	To justify/defend assumptions

(Gerard & Ellinor, 2000)

Gerard and Ellinor (2000) in the Dialogue Group's website (http://www.dialogroup.com) explore four skill building blocks for dialogue: the ability to suspend judgment, assumption identification, listening and reflective inquiry. Suspension of judgment does not necessitate that the participants do away with their judgments and opinions, as this is not possible. Suspension of judgment does require that the participants create a space between their judgment and our reaction. This space can take the shape of silence or a pause that "opens the door for listening" (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000). Creating this opening and consequently learning to suspend their judgment, the participants, in effect, will be building a climate of trust and safety. Participants' feeling of trust and safety are nurtured when they witness that they will not be "judged" for

opinions. Thus, they will feel freer to express themselves in the newly developed open and truthful atmosphere.

Assumption identification necessitates that the participants learn to examine underlying assumptions behind theirs and others' decisions and actions. Once the participants are able to identify where there are irregularities in their strategies, they become more open to alternative actions. Learning to identify their assumptions allows the participants to explore differences with others, build common ground or shared symbols and get to the core of existing misunderstandings (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000).

Listening is what Gerard and Ellinor (2000) refer to as the "key to perception." In getting participants to understand the importance of listening to dialogue, it may be helpful to have them create a personal definition of listening. This can take the form of having them think about the activities that they identify with listening, such as how they know that they are listening, being listened to, as well as what does listening feel like and how could they improve their listening (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000). In all, listening involves developing the ability to comprehend the meaning of what is said by the individuals and the collective group. This understanding requires participant exploration of the assumptions they are hearing and considering which of those are shared. As these shared meanings evolve, the participants become more able to make their own choices about their decisions and actions, rather than allowing the surrounding culture to dictate their direction (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000).

Participant inquiry and reflection are a final yet imperative aspect of meaningful communication (dialogue). Inquiry and reflection require learning how to ask questions that lead to new levels of understanding. Many questions of inquiry and reflection

(Gerard & Ellinor, 2000) look like or begin with statements of wonder (I wonder...), new possibilities (what if...) or asking others what they think (what does this mean to you). The purpose of encouraging participants to ask these questions or make these statements is so that they gain a greater awareness into their thinking as well as others' thinking processes and the issues that divide them. As in suspension of judgment, it is important to encourage moments of silence or pauses in speech to create pauses for reflection. Working with silence, as described, does slow the rate of conversation (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000), but it accelerates learning and communication.

In addition to being memorable, Ulster Project activities designed to foster and augment communication skills incorporate emotional as well as intellectual material. The many different perspectives that arise during these activities should encourage a greater understanding of what effective communication is. When clearer definitions of ambiguous terms such as peace and justice result from their dialogue, the Project will have evidence of this greater understanding.

Theme Introductory Activities

Communication Knot

Summary

A communication exercise

Objectives

To explore communication and problem solving skills

Materials

1. An open area (preferably outside)

Time Limit

15 – 30 minutes

Procedure

1. Break the group up into smaller groups consisting of between 6 and 10 persons.
2. Have the smaller groups stand in a circle and hold hands. They must remain holding hands in a locked position throughout the exercise.
3. Have one person walk under the arms of another on the opposite side of the circle. Have another person do the same. Repeat until the group is tied in a knot.
4. Now, the group must un-tie themselves while continuing to hold hands. At no time should they lose grip with their neighbors. They need to communicate with each other and work together to successfully un-tie themselves. Again, they should remain holding hands throughout this activity.

Commentary

This activity uses communication, problem solving skills, and teamwork for success. This activity can be used as an early exercise in communication and teamwork.

Variation

Increasing the number of participants in the knotted group can increase the complexity of the knot developed. This exercise can be performed as a series of steps starting with a small group of people (e.g. 4) and increasing the number of participants, as each knot is untied.

Tower Building (Can also be used in Leadership and Risk Taking)

Summary

An exercise in teamwork and problem solving

Objectives

To emphasize teamwork and problem-solving

Materials

1. Two pieces of paper per group (loose leaf or copy paper)
2. Four paper clips per group
3. One table per group or a non-carpet, non-grass surface

Time Limit

30-45 minutes

Procedure

1. Split the participants up into smaller groups of 3 or 4 persons
2. Give each group two pieces of paper and four paper clips

3. Instruct the students that they have 30 minutes to build the tallest, freestanding structure using only those materials.
4. At the end of 30 minutes, discuss the issues that arose in the problem-solving process involved in all groups.

Commentary

A hint on what can win, take a piece of paper and roll it vertically. Attach it with a paper clip and stand it on the table.

Variation

Any set of materials or task may work. The important point is to give as few materials as possible to accomplish a task. By doing so, you are forcing the participants to be as creative as possible and work together to complete the task. Another variation may be a piece of cardboard and glue with the task of building a boat or raft.

An Activity Framework for Communication:

Communication is More Than Talking[5]

Overview:

Communication often fails because the speaker and the listener have few shared symbols, and oftentimes, even when the symbols are the same, they are interpreted differently (Banks, 1997). Using the principles of dialogue, the Northern Irish youth can find new ways to identify the barriers to effective communication and develop a means of overcoming them through newly developed shared symbols.

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[5] Consalvo's (1996) Changing Pace Games 3, 15 and 63 are excellent introductory activities for this Theme that use both physical and intellectual stimulation. Although not as content specific, games 8, 10 and 14 are also good openers.

Goals:

1. Participants will develop a respect for differences that is grounded in the belief that everyone has an essential contribution to make and is to be honored for the perspective that only they can bring (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000).
2. Participants will learn to suspend the judgments while understanding that no one perspective is more important than the other is (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000).
3. Participants will practice inquiry and advocacy in order to discover and understand others' perspectives and ideas (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000).
4. Participants will bring forth and make visible assumptions (theirs and others) while developing a new understanding of the issues (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000).
5. Participants will focus on learning from each other to broaden their current understandings, rather than focus on evaluating whose perspective is the "best" view (Gerard & Ellinor, 2000).

Actions:

1. Choose an open-ended story that presents a problem situation [e.g. *Seed of Distrust* from Shaftel & Shaftel (1982)].
2. Share with the participants the key principles of dialogue (see activity suggestions).
3. Pose questions designed to initiate communication [e.g. Banks, (1997) suggests:
    - What is the main problem of the story?
    - What do you think of the characters? Why do you think that?
    - What kinds of things and people do you think are important to each of them? Why do you think that?
    - Do you think that the character(s) should have acted as they did? Why or why not?
    - Do you think that the other character(s) were honest? Why or why not?
    - What are some courses of action that the character(s) can take? What should the character(s) do? Why should they do that?
    - What would you do in that character(s) shoes? What would the consequences of that action be? Why would they be as such? (Banks, 1997)].
4. Dialogue may continue to evolve as the participants communicate to each other on the possibilities. It would likely be worthwhile to have them begin to develop solutions, as this is likely to lead to the Conflict Deliberation theme.

Some suggestions to guide the participants dialogue

Dana (2000) has structured a conflict mediation facilitator's guide. Of which, Ulster Project counselors will find individual value in and the participants beginning to apply the concepts of dialogue in their own practice will find value for the dynamics of the group interaction. Dana (2000) begins by naming the most critical part of the a facilitator's task is to allow the group to carry on, while not attempting to be the content area matter expert. This framework will assist counselors and participants in achieving its goals.

Dana (2000) provides several considerations that will further explain how not to be a content area expert but still be an effective facilitator of dialogue. To begin, facilitators should clarify that the purpose of the dialogue is not to vote on answers or to come to a consensus on the "right answer." Instead, the purpose of dialogue is to encourage deeper thinking about the issues raised. Deeper thinking occurs when everyone thinks about merits of alternative answers that surface through communication (Dana, 2000). The next action for facilitators is to reflect back to the participants their questions that seek "right answers" (Dana, 2000). This type of reflection looks like

- What do some of you think about what was said?
- What would you say if you were asked that question (Dana, 2000)?

Facilitators should also work to de-emphasize evaluation of each other's ideas. In other words, guide the participants away from making judgments of good, bad; right and wrong (Dana, 2000) Non-judgmental exploration of new ideas can take several forms. For examples,

- Interesting idea, what do others think?
- Did anyone answer that question differently?
- What seemed right your thoughts, as you may open up some new insights for others (Dana, 2000)?

Facilitating and participating dialogue is not always an easy and comfortable situation, especially for those new to the practice. Nevertheless it remains important for the facilitator to model positive attitudes toward the issues being deliberated and the purpose of dialogue. Again, Dana (2000) gives some guidance.

- I understand that this is a tough issue to think about and that you are uncertain that your ideas make sense. However, it is the same for all of us and we need your help to help us learn, not to get a right answer.
- What are some other peoples' impressions of this activity?
- Remember that we can all have different ideas, and that the truth is not always obvious. Having said that, what do you think about the issue (Dana, 2000)?

Theme Two – Leadership and Risk Taking

Leaders need to be able to encourage learning. Those who are encouraged to learn will become inspired. The Ulster Project participants can demonstrate their leadership potential when they take risks while knowingly taking a stand on issues necessary for success. In taking risks as leaders, the youth engage themselves in activities that encourage them to understand other points of view or perspectives (Senge, 1994).

The Ulster Project has created a framework in which its participants are given a chance to investigate the unknown and, as leaders transfer a vision to all of the other participants. Most importantly, as Consalvo (1996) would support, Ulster Project Breakthroughs are designed to allow the youth to do their own thinking without the staff dictating the paths to success.

Theme Introductory Activities

Blind Faith (Consalvo, 1996)

Summary

A trust progression using blindfolds.

Objectives

To explore communication, risk taking, and trust building.

Materials

1. A large, open, level area that has good footing and several natural or set obstacles on the periphery (see "Procedure").

2. More than enough large, clean bandannas of a variety of colors and designs for each of the participants. Fold the bandannas diagonally to facilitate their use as blindfolds.

Time Limit

25-75 minutes, depending on how much you want to discuss.

Procedure

1. Explain to the group that they will be going through a progression of activities called "Blind Faith," which is designed to help them experience and examine the concepts of trust, communication, and their relationship.
2. Pass around the bandannas and ask everyone to take one.
3. Explain that the blindfolds are optional accessories and note the following: no one will be made fun of or in any way deliberately tricked or embarrassed while blindfolded. The blind will be protected. A "Freeze!" command will be used if there is a need to stop the action for safety reasons. Peeking is a matter of challenge by choice. If anyone does peek, he or she should do so in an inconspicuous manner that will not make the accomplishment of the team's task easier. They are on the honor system.
4. Ask the group to put on their blindfolds. Once they are "blind," explain that their first task is to line up according to height, from tallest to shortest, without speaking. Tell the group they should raise their hands when they think they have completed their task. When the group is ready, ask them to takeoff their blindfolds and discuss how they communicated and what it felt like doing the activity.
5. When the review is complete, ask the participants to fold their hands and note whether their right or left thumb is on top. Ask them to pair up with someone with a different thumb dominance (that is, rights with lefts). If the group has more of one thumb dominance than another does, allow those with same thumb dominance to pair up.
6. Tell the group that the next activity will involve being either blind or mute and that each will get a chance to experience both. Ask them to decide who will be blind first.
7. Once the blindfolds are on, remind the mut4es that they can make no sound whatever and that they should be careful with the precious bodies in their trust.
8. Explain that the mutes are to lead the blind safely around the area until you signal them to switch roles.
9. Give each pair 3-4 minutes before consulting about the experience.
10. Ask participants to hop on one foot and pair up with someone who is hopping on the opposite foot from theirs.

11. Explain that this activity will duplicate the previous blind-mute experience; only the blind person is also mute. Allow participants a turn each of 2-3 minutes.
12. Tell the group that the last challenge has two parts. In the first part, their only means of contact will be by holding opposite ends of the mute person's bandanna. The second phase will be the same as the first except the blind person is also mute and at a point somewhere near an obstacle (for example, a wall, boulder, fence, chair, table). The mute person will leave the blind person and regain speech in order to talk the blind and mute person over, under, around, onto or through the obstacle. Since they will not be able to touch each other, emphasize that they must be extra careful.
13. Let the first phase go for 2-3 minutes, then signal the pairs to begin the second phase. Remind them of its constraints. After they have all negotiated the obstacles, tell them to switch roles and repeat the sequence.
14. Don't rush the review session.

Commentary

This activity is rich in both the cognitive and emotional material that it brings up for people. Differences in giving and receiving feedback, support, challenges, and expectations raise many issues related to styles and perceptions about what is enough when it comes to communication, trust, and risk taking. The activity is best used early on in a team-building program.

Variation

The sequence is one of graduated steps and therefore it is best to keep the order in case you want to skip some of the activities. The sequence can be separated by lunch or another activity. A mid-level challenge is for the participants to line up by birthday, month and day, being both blind and mute. This same challenge is a good icebreaker for a group that is only mute.

Trust Fall

Summary

Tests of trust using a group of people. People take a turn making a fall of faith that the group will catch them.

Objectives

To explore trust building and risk taking

Materials

1. An open area
2. A table or chair (some form of riser that a person can stand on)

Time Limit

15 – 45 min depending on the size of the group

Procedure

1. Explain to the group that they will be participating in the Trust Fall Exercise. This exercise is designed to build trust and take risks.
2. Split the group into smaller subgroups of no less than six persons and no greater than 10.
3. All of the participants, except for one, should stand in two lines, facing each other. The lined participants should clasp hands in a locked position. They should be located adjacent to the riser.

4. The remaining participant should climb on to the riser, with his/her back to the participants. His/her heels should be at the edge of the riser. He/she should keep his/her arms crossed with legs together. He/she should keep his/her eyes closed once he/she is in position.
5. At the count of three, the participant should lean back off the riser and into the arms of the grouped participants.
6. Repeat this until all participants have served as the falling participant.

Commentary

This exercise should follow a more progressive trust-building activity (i.e. Consalvo's Blind Faith exercise).

An Activity Framework for Leadership and Risk Taking:

Being a Steward, Teacher and Risk Taker[6]

Overview:

Senge (1990) provides the understanding that "leaders may start by pursuing their own vision, but as they learn to listen carefully to others' visions they begin to see that their own personal vision is part of something larger" (p. 352). By stressing four of Block's (1996) six strategic points, we can encourage the Northern Irish youth to shift from a possessive understanding of their vision to a more comprehensive understanding of the practical actions leading toward the larger vision of a lasting peace.

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[6] Consalvo's (1996) Changing Pace Games 4, 8, 10 and 14 are excellent opener activities for this Theme that use both physical and intellectual stimulation.

Goals: (Block's Points)

1. Participants will affirm their longing to invest their energy in things that matter by taking responsibility and owning their own actions.
2. Participants will seek out partnerships that result in mutual accountability for actions taken.
3. Participants will realize that mutual accountability in leadership implies that each member is responsible for delivering their theoretical understanding to all participants.
4. Participants will articulate how they will move the theoretical understandings to practical actions (Block, 1996).

Actions:

1. Choose a poem, quote, story or any other media that has a topical focus on leadership, or leadership characteristics that can be construed within the media. (By selecting several different media with different aspects of leadership represented, the participants will be prepared for a more comprehensive dialogue on leadership).
2. Place participants into smaller groups and identify each group as a content area expert on their particular leadership topic.
3. The small groups watch, read or listen to the media representation of their topic.
4. Within the group, the participants identify the crucial characteristics expressed in the media about their leadership topic.
5. The small groups will share their findings with the larger group.
6. Follow up dialogue involves constructing a new understanding of leadership.
7. From the new understanding, the group will create a multidimensional portrait of their leader. This multidimensional portrait should include both audible and visible representations (e.g. drawing, spoken word, music, poetry, etc.) with each participant taking a different role.
8. Seek a new dialogue on leadership and their potential as future leaders.

Some suggestions to guide the participants dialogue

In creating a new leader and representing this leader by using drawing, spoken word, music, poetry, etc., the participants are working toward an audible and visible representation of a shared and larger vision. Yet, given that each of the participants has their own talents and understandings, it would be impossible for them to successfully represent the shared image (vision) of a leader if they were to do this individually. Doing so would only result in the manifestation of their singularly possessive vision, rather than the shared image of a leader. Thus, by taking different roles in the creation and representation of a leader, the participants must not only teach each other their insight of what a leader is, they must also remain open to improvement of their individual ideas for the larger vision of the group. As such, participants' may see problems within the current activity framework, but finding a solution depends on their ability to speak out (take risks) and take action by teaching the others.

The action taken is representative of journey taken toward the vision. Potential leaders need to be wary of the parallels between this journey and those previously taken. In other words, the leaders can and should take from learned experiences. To ignore them would be foolish, just as ignoring the individual elements that need to operate to make the larger vision attainable would be. These elements are the contributions of all of the participants, from their insight (personal vision of leadership) to their actions (portrait contribution). Connecting these contributors in achieving the larger group vision requires each of the participants to engage in the practice of leadership.

Senge (1990) offers some additional insight that can guide this dialogue.

1) Leadership entails helping others see the larger vision by:
   a) Exploring how different parts of the group interact.
   b) Seeking the manner by which different situations parallel one another because of common underlying structures.
   c) Uncovering how individual actions can have a great impact (positive or negative) on the group as a whole.
2) Leaders are teachers because they have the ability to transform their insights, so that they become public knowledge open to deliberation and improvement.
3) Leaders are risk takers because they have a relentless commitment to the truth, and as a result, continually identify the gaps between the reality and the vision.

Theme Three – Conflict Deliberation

Current conflict resolution practices offer little promise for the future leaders of Northern Ireland because many of these practices are merely a prescribed series of steps or strategic sequences of thought to be applied at various stages of the resolution process. The greatest fault with this mode of thinking is that its practice is necessarily limited to the pretext of rational thinking. Unfortunately, little evidence exists that indicates people remain in a state of rationality during circumstances necessitating conflict resolution. By definition, a conflict elicits strong emotions that will compromise rational thought. As a result, the Ulster Project attempts to provide the Northern Irish youth a framework for understanding conflict deliberation (rather than resolution) as it applies to their unique understandings of their societal role and the emotions that accompany them.

The structure or framework of conflict deliberation activities is what Wolcott (1988) refers to as an opportunity for the youth to look more carefully, analyze more critically, and recognize the complexity or lack thereof of the situations they face. In short, the Ulster Project attempts to break down conflict, irrationality and misunderstanding, into mutually understandable participant terms.

The Ulster Project participants are given the opportunity to practice helping those involved in a dispute by exploring ways of understanding the problem and the associated emotions, most often by listening, guiding dialogue and clarifying pertinent issues. The most important aspect of this approach is that it offers guidance not a solution in a time of need (Ferrara, 1996). Thus, the ownership remains with the people involved rather than someone else, and this ownership possession leads to greater and more thoughtful commitment to the deliberation. Ultimately, this approach to conflict requires a renewed

understanding of the integral role conflict or problems play in everyday lives. Stated differently, McCutcheon (1995) believes that when people disagree there is conflict; however, if during this conflict the disagreeing parties continue to talk and think, they will ultimately begin to explore "ideas more carefully than they would if unanimity existed" (p. 7). This power of this claim is heightened as the indicated parties talk not only of the conflict but also create a framework or guidelines for new dialogue (McCutcheon, 1995). Overall, the actions taken when faced with problems work to manage (not necessarily resolve) conflict by no longer suppressing, fighting through them nor relying on the unknowing to solve the situation.

Theme Introductory Activity

Blind description

Summary

An exercise in deception

Objectives

This exercise is designed to show how easy it is to manipulate the truth to portray different point of view.

Materials

1. A variety of common objects (statue/picture of an animal, soccer ball, etc.)
2. Blindfolds

Time Limit

30 – 45 minutes

Procedure

1. Separate the participants into two groups and have them seated in a circle
2. Blindfold one group of participants
3. Show the non-blindfolded participants the object, e.g. a picture of a horse
4. Give the non-blindfolded participants a piece of paper with what answer they are to try to elicit from the blindfolded participants
5. The non-blindfolded participants are instructed not to lie. Everything they say must be true of the object or what the object represents.
6. End the activity after 20 minutes or if the blindfolded group guesses the "incorrect object."
7. Switch groups such that now the blindfolded group is the non-blindfolded group.
8. For example, the object is a statue of a horse. The blindfolded group is to be convinced that it is a fish. Therefore, the non-blindfolded group can say things like, it is an animal, it can be trained/domesticated, it can swim, etc. However, they cannot say it has scales; it lives in water, etc.

Commentary

This exercise is more difficult than it may initially appear but can be effective in showing how manipulation can work and it is important that all participants serve as a manipulated group.

Variation

Some variations include allowing or not allowing the blindfolded group to ask questions, using smaller groups, etc.

An Activity Framework for Conflict deliberation:

Using Deliberation to Move from an Awareness of the Problem to Taking Action

Overview:

Presuming an existing awareness, or even simple recognizance of a problem is gross undervaluing of the value conflict has in creating opportunities that initiate actions capable of building lasting peace. Moreover, contrary to what traditional conflict resolution models would put forward, the Northern Irish youth should appreciate that the existence of conflict does not necessitate an analytical and empirically sterile transfiguration of a problem into a resolute answer. There are frameworks that can guide or assist in mediating possible solutions leading to peace without dictating methodology. Action within such a framework requires that the Northern Irish youth develop a means of becoming aware of a problem as well as the factors inhibiting potential deliberation. Afterwards, the Northern Irish youth can begin constructing and applying deliberation strategies.

Goals:

1. Participants will learn to recognize potential conflict.
2. Participants will understand that conflict is can be understood as pressure for innovations and creativity (McCutcheon, 1995).
3. Participants will recognize factors that may be prohibitive of productive deliberation.
4. Participants will practice facilitating dialogue intended to uncover new possibilities emerging from the conflict.

Actions:

1. Choose several popular and current events or other issues that are relative to yours and the overall groups' knowledge.
2. Participants should briefly explain their understanding of the event or issue.[7] In doing so, the participants should list the symptoms that indicate something is wrong and describe the relevant details (Pereira, 1984).
3. Facilitators/Participants should note several emergent and key matters as new categories of potential conflict, differences of opinion, or other class of problems. As a result, Pereira (1984) explains that the facilitators/participants begin to formulate a diagnosis of what is going wrong and plausible causes.

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[7] Crucial to success of this activity is the understanding that it is not a linear or a step-by-step procedure. It, as Pereira (1984) would indicate, encourages alternative explorations but gives participants a security blanket that comforts them with the knowledge that they have thoughtfully deliberated through the conflict.

4. These new categories are articulated and the participants opt for the primary category to be explored.[8] Simply put, the facilitators/participants are framing the problem that requires attention (Pereira, 1984).
5. Participants communicate the possible impediments to working through the deliberation experience;[9] or, as Pereira (1984) states, the facilitator/participants inventory the constraints of the problem and the resulting conflict.
6. Dialogue relevant to the category of exploration should focus on possible solutions to the problem (conflict).[10]
7. Participants consider how much additional, if any, information is needed or whether new categories of exploration need to develop.
8. Participants develop frameworks for action that is inclusive of a demonstrated shared vision of the possibilities.
9. Participants prepare and adjust accordingly for the consequences of the proposed framework (Pereira, 1984).
10. Participants take action.

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[8] At this point, the counselor may be the primary facilitator, however, the participants should eventually emerge as the deliberation facilitators (please refer to Facilitation Framework at the end of this section).
[9] According to McCutcheon (1995), many of these impediments are attributable to stress related factors. Their results include but are not limited to a narrowing perspective, a disregard for the alternatives, disorganization, impatience and forgetfulness.
[10] Dialogue resulting from these possible solutions should take into consideration that there might be previously undiscovered dimensions of the problem or in actuality a larger conflict in hand (Hill, 1982).

Some suggestions to guide the participants dialogue

McCutcheon (1995) offers some useful questions that participants can consider when facilitating conflict deliberation. They are:

- What features of this proposed solution are feasible and likely to succeed? Why?
- Which features are likely to be problematic? Why?
- What are the other participants' views of this solution? Why do they hold those views? How does each of these views fit the problem?
- What are some alternative solutions? Do they fit the nature of the problem?
- What are the specific details of this problem? How can they be grouped together?
- What specific solutions could rest between the extremes? In what ways does (does not) each fit the problem? (p. 21)

Theme Four – Understanding Social Practice (Discourse)

The Ulster Project draws from history, literature and the arts to indoctrinate the Project participants into a new understanding of their own and the "other's" social practice. By doing so, the Ulster Project hopes to stimulate a participant inquiry of how they can become "fair minded, critical thinkers" that "show empathy for diverse and opposing points of view and seek truth without reference to ones self-interest (Bennett, 1995, p.341)," but to the vested interest of a peaceful community. The activities used to encourage this exploration primarily use and compel the participants into decision-making situations. Another way of understanding this emphasis on decision-making comes from Phelan and McLaughlin (1995).

> One constructs and reconstructs perspectives through discourse, as well as the ongoing interactions one has with others and oneself, whether talking reading or writing or thinking to oneself while acting (p.166).

Understanding the implications of the manner discourses manifest themselves collectively, actively and historically (Phelan & McLaughlin, 1995), the Ulster Project creates situations that the participants can address the patterns and thoughts related to the key issues requiring decisions in the their lives.

Theme Introductory Activity

See Blind Description Activity from Conflict Deliberation

An Activity Framework for Understanding Social Practice

(Discourse):

Media Literacy

Overview:

Semali (1998) provides a framework to question myths and stereotypes created largely in storybooks, literature, media and the film industry. By posing strategic questions, we can encourage the Northern Irish youth to investigate and critically evaluate the various assumptions relative to the discourse that underlie the production values of news and the rest of the media.

Goals:

1. Participants will understand that all media contains distortions and that different media send different messages.
2. Participants will understand how the media affects our interpretations of the world.
3. Participants will realize that by gaining insight into basic assumptions, values, beliefs and the resulting discourse they can critically think about human events and creations.

Actions:

1. Choose appropriate media (multiple sources can be used, and may be preferred for deeper levels of dialogue) that has a topical focus or plot relative to yours and the overall groups' knowledge.
2. Place participants into smaller groups and identify each group as a content "expert" group.
3. Watch, read or listen to the media representation of the issue with each of the experts seeking out that information most relevant to their content area.
4. Have the experts present their findings to all.
5. Follow up dialogue involves identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each of the findings.
6. Seek an exploration of what discourse is and develop implications for what the affect of discourse was on the media representation of the issue.

Some suggestions to guide the participants dialogue[11]

Media Literacy Activity Guide

1. Who produced the media, under what circumstances, and for what possible reasons?
    - These answers are not always readily apparent. However, considering the possibilities enables the participant to determine the authenticity of the information presented.
    - The participant must realize that many of the arguments presented could be self-serving and designed largely to protect or to enhance the invested interest.

2. What is happening and over what period?
    - Understanding the history surrounding the situation allows the participant to appreciate why the situation developed as it did.
    - The participant must seek and identify the social environment surrounding the situation.

3. What type of image is given? How is that image given? What is media's focus (the people or the object)? What characteristics does that person or object have? Whose point of view is represented? Who is the target audience? What information is not given? How does not giving this information affect the image of the person or object?
    - Answering these questions increases the participants' awareness of the existing biases of media representations.
    - An analysis of the historical conditions surrounding the situation allows for a greater understanding of the present relationships between the people and image represented.
    - The participants should pay attention to words and phrases that sum up main ideas or themes and consider how these ideas are understood by others.

4. What information does the media mention and take for granted that the viewer understands?
    - The participant should try to see the connections between how the images created match the narration.
5. What argument most strongly influences the viewer and why?
    - The participant should distinguish between emotional and "factual" narration.

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[11] The following guide is adapted from Semali and Watts Pailliotet's (1999) Intermediality. It is intended to offer some suggestions for facilitating participants' dialogue.

Theme Five – Interdependence and Collaboration

Two practices drive interdependence and collaboration: intimacy[12] and shared authority. Understandably, there are impediments to interdependence and collaboration. These impediments are the youth's assumptions about the dynamics of human behavior and about how future leaders should conduct themselves, or disseminate knowledge and responsibility. To overcome these impediments, the Ulster Project attempts to provide a framework of inquiry and advocacy by which the youth can reinvent the existing models of cross community relationships.

The Ulster Project tries to elicit a deeper reflection about the participants' beliefs about themselves, their spirituality and community relationships by inviting them to look at the carefully guarded structures in which they depend on for everyday living and task completion. Those youth accepting this invitation attempt to see their Project peers behind the mask of a particular identity, role or function.

Engaging themselves in open communication about aspirations and thoughts triggers the participants looking beyond the mask. However, communication in and of itself is not enough. As leaders, the Ulster Project participants must practice inquiry and advocacy of their fellow participants (Senge, 1994). This inquiry and advocacy of Project participants, in turn, allows the youth to enhance their understanding of each other and the role this understanding plays in their shared vision. Achieving a shared vision requires that the decisions made en route to the objective evolve from the collective understanding of all the participants, thus, all participants share authority.

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[12] Intimacy in this context is not an inference to emotional and physical involvement. More precisely, intimacy refers to one's passing on information to another, or "to notify" (Senge, 1994).

The Project activities emphasizing *shared authority* give the *Northern Irish* youth a greater understanding of the interdependent factors involved in any lasting peace process, as well as a look into the collaboration needed to develop and maintain such initiatives. More specifically, these activities attempt to demonstrate the inseparable relationship between shared authority, interdependence and collaboration by forcing the participants to recognize that, in this practice decisions can be individualistic. However, they are most successful when done with full understanding of how peers think and feel.[13]

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[13] The Ulster Project activities emphasize this by allowing the participants to practice intimacy. In other words, all of the participants become aware of the activities' objectives and implications by making sure that everyone shares accurate information as completely as possible.

Theme Introductory Activities

Sharing

Summary

An exercise in sharing information

Objectives

To emphasize similarities between participants

Materials

1. A relatively large quantity of some type of marker (e.g. M&M, pebble, marbles, toilet paper (tear off sheets), etc), enough to accommodate five markers per person.
2. A bag or bowl to use to pass the markers around.

Time Limit

15 – 30 minutes

Procedure

1. Have the students stand or sit in a circle.
2. Pass around a bag of M&Ms or pebbles or some other marker
3. Instruct the students to take as many pieces as they want
4. After the bag has circulated the group, instruct the students that they must now share the same number of pieces of information as the number of pebbles that they possess. It is important that this piece of instruction occurs after the participants have selected some number of markers.

Commentary

This activity is designed to emphasize similarities rather than differences, so be sure that they only share positive things (e.g., My favorite flavor of ice cream is Mint Chocolate Chip rather than I hate sports.)

Variation

You can be as general or as specific as you want with the instructions. For example, you may specify that the participants should name hobbies or favorite things or favorite activities or plans, etc.

Line of Experience

Summary

An exercise in sharing experiences

Objectives

To emphasize similarities in experiences

Materials

None

Time Limit

15 – 30 minutes

Procedure

1. All of the participants should stand in a line, shoulder to shoulder.
2. The counselors will have a list of experiences to read off.
3. Instruct the participants to step forward if they have had the mentioned experience.

4. One counselor should read off an experience from the list and wait. Participants who have had that experience should step forward. The participants should be instructed to look at who has stepped forward and who has not and think about how it makes them feel.
5. Repeat step 4 until the list is completed
6. At the end of the activity, have the participants sit in a circle and discuss how they felt when they were standing as someone who had that experience, in addition to how they felt when they were not standing as someone who had that experience.

Commentary

This exercise is meant to show similarities. Some more sensitive issues can be used but may also be avoided. The important point is to show that regardless of their religious belief, any one may have been a victim of discrimination, for example.

Variation

As with the previous exercise, this may be as general or as specific as desired. The issues may be as benign as attending school to sensitive as victim of discrimination.

Information Chairs

Summary

An exercise in sharing information

Objectives

This exercise is designed to encourage the sharing of personal information in a fun atmosphere.

Materials

1. An open space
2. Music is optional

Time Limit

30-60 minutes

Procedure

1. Have the participants sit in a circle, shoulder to shoulder except for one participant, who will stand in the middle of the circle.
2. The participant in the middle must share a piece of true information about him/herself.
3. All participants in the circle for which that information is also true, must stand up and move to another seat. The person in the middle must also find a seat. Here is where music can be used to set the time to find a new seat.
4. Only one person should be left standing in the middle.
5. Repeat steps 2 through 4 until everyone in the group has taken a turn being the person in the middle.

Commentary

This activity is a spin-off from the musical chairs game. The information shared can be serious or silly. Try to encourage positive information sharing (My favorite food is pasta rather than I hate this activity).

Variation

Any type of specifications can be added to the information that is shared, i.e. they must discuss hobbies. The important aspect of this activity is that the information must be true to the person standing in the middle.

An Activity Framework for Interdependence and Collaboration:

Showing Your Stuff: Ideas to Action[14]

Overview:

The Northern Irish youth have unique assumptions about how people interact, and how they should conduct themselves, disseminate knowledge and demonstrate responsibility. Throughout the project, the Ulster Project attempted to provide a framework of inquiry and advocacy by which the youth can reinvent models of cross community relationships. This activity gives the participants an opportunity to act within that framework and show the world how what they think cross community collaboration should be, as well as demonstrates their understanding of and ability to work within an interdependent world.

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[14] Consalvo's (1996) Changing Pace Games 4, 26, 30, 37, 42 and 43 are excellent opener activities for this Theme that use both physical and intellectual stimulation.

Goals:

1. Participants will practice sharing information.
2. Participants will learn to share authority, thus share credit for success.
3. Participants will recognize the importance of collaborating with other individuals and other teams.
4. Participants will understand how interdependent they are on each other.

Actions:

1. Very early in the Project, give the participants a brief understanding of the highly wrought work, collaboration and sense of interdependency required to create the Ulster Project Breakthroughs.
2. Inform participants that they will need to apply all of their communication skills, leadership ability, conflict deliberation skills, demonstrated understanding of each other's actions to collaborate and design their own breakthrough.
3. Their breakthrough will be done at the end of the project, and the purpose of having them design their own is so that they can more fully appreciate how interdependent we all are on each other.
4. Earlier in the project, the smaller breakthrough groups may want to develop some possibilities. Gradually, the participants should work collectively on the break through design.

Some suggestions to guide the participants dialogue

- The smaller (fragmented) groups early in the Project may allow for some needing nurturing of a sense of safety and comfort.
- Coming together and working your ideas into the larger group requires risks, and leaders take risk.
- Achieving a shared vision requires that the decisions made en route to the objective evolve from the collective understanding of all the participants. Thus, all participants must share authority.
- Participants must recognize that in this practice decisions can be individualistic. However, they are most successful when done with full understanding of how peers think and feel.
- Peace is only possible when we all share, not through fragmentation.

Chapter 03: Some Additional Things to Consider

There are a few additional suggestions to consider when practicing or engaging in the Ulster Project curricular activities. They are (Barell, 1995):

- Arranging the participants in a circle, so that they can see each other's faces,
- Encourage the participants to respond to one another and not just to the counselor,
- Being prepared to guide the group to work toward a reasonable solution (This often requires a deep understanding of the issue),
- Attempt to reveal all possible solutions and perspectives on the issue (Often, this means enabling the quiet students to understand that their view-points are worth sharing and should be vocalized), and
- Search for other points of view that may be contrary to a prevailing perspective.

Chapter 04: A Final Thought

In conclusion, counselors need to remember that controversy, doubts and disagreements within the Ulster Project Breakthrough environment are not obstacles. With an understanding of critical theory, they can be the initiators of intellectual development, spiritual growth and cultural understanding. Therefore, modeling, teaching thoughtfulness directly and identifying models in everyday life, as well as literature and history must all become part of the Ulster Project counselors' pedagogical strategies.

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